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In postulate I, the modal life role for women is described as that of the homemaker. Postulate II proposes that the nature of the woman's role is not static, ultimately bearing no distinction from that of men. Postulate III states that the role of women is orderly and developmental, divisible into major segments according to the major task in each. Postulate IV contends that vocational and homemaker participation are mutually exclusive. Postulate V states that age of entry, span of participation, and degree of participation are sufficent to distinguish patterns of vocational participation. The degree of vocational participation represented by a given occupation is defined in postulate VI as the proportion of women to the total workers in that job. Postulate VII contends that women's vocational participation may be distinguished in terms of three levels. Postulate VIII hypothesizes that preference for a pattern for vocational participation is determined mainly by internal, motivating factors. Postulate IX contends that the pattern of vocational participation is determined jointly by preference and by external and internal factors. (IM)

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A Theory of Vocational Development for Women

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A Theory For Women?

Since the time last summer when the first postulates of this theory were conceived, a new tide of feminism has swept into the popular media and I have come to realize that this paper may be less than accepted by all. This is not the time to propose that women are special, unique; that they are different from men. But the fact is that they are: fundamentally in anatomy, and in varying degrees physiologically, socially, and emotionally. I do not propose these postulates in order to equate their differences with inferior position, but only to describe what is, and what will remain in some degree for a long time. No one would be more pleased than myself if this formulation or one like it were to make it possible for women to gain equal access to those rewards more usually reserved for men.

Before I undertake a presentation concerning women, I think it is appropriate to address the question of "Why a theory of vocational development at all?" The first order of response is that it is for the purpose of description. We strive to represent the essential elements of vocational behavior and development in order to differentiate people who have different kinds of careers. However the scientist spins his theories not only to describe, but to predict. He predicts both in order to anticipate the outcomes of his experiments, and to be able to cause new outcomes to appear. He wants to gain control. The social scientist is more ill-at-ease with a concept of control emanating from his theory building. The student of vocational behavior and development is no less wary of the development of this systematic thinking beyond prediction, into the realm of control.

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Super (1954) has already commented on this problem in his article, "Guidance: Manpower utilization or human development?" Seemingly, if the control over the vocational development of persons is employed in their own service - to assist them in discovering and attaining their optimal career - agreement might be obtained that this control is beneficial. Conversely, if control were exercised for the benefit of a small group, without the consent of those controlled, many would have realistic objections. Thus, I should like it to be understood that this theorizing is undertaken for the ultimate purpose of assisting women in gaining their optimal potential, though I suppose they would have little objection if it were employed in the "national" or some similar interests, could they be agreed upon by those most directly affected.

This material is not offered necessarily as a new system: Dr. Matthews and Mrs. Risch have contributed, as have writers on the vocational behavior of men. It is submitted as a recombination and refinement of what already exists with a few new ideas. But to represent women in less than a dozen sentences may be offensive: I do so not to insult the female sex, but for a purpose of providing material from which testable hypotheses might be generated. It is achieved, if it is at all, at the expense of elegance and complete appreciation of women's complexity.

The Postulates

The difference between men and women is an appropriate beginning for a set of postulates attempting to characterize the vocational development of women.

As I have said, women have a fundamental difference from men, manifested in their ability to conceive, bear and nurse children. Concomitantly, a social role for women exists which springs from this distinctive function.

To attempt to spell out that social role here, would be to invite useless disagreement, for while the core of the role can be identified, its variations and permutations have no limit. Helene Deutsch (1944) has described it more sympathetically than I could ever hope to. Suffice it to say, that it has been traditionally organized around the nurturance of children, and the support of the efforts of the breadwinner of the family. It may be labelled that of the homemaker.

Postulate I. The modal life role for women is described as that of the homemaker.

Neither the biological nor social role of the homemaker is static, nor has it ever been equivalent with that of a brood mare, house maid, or indentured servant, as some advocates of woman-power would have us believe.

Women have recently gained from technology the option of bearing children. Even historically, childrearing has not meant confinement; the use of the wet nurse has been supplanted by the sterile bottle and milk formula. Child-care centers have begun to gain acceptance. It is not inconceivable that conception and the intra-uterine portion of the child's life could be removed to some external environment, so that the mother could opt not to allow a pregnancy to interfere with whatever she wishes to do otherwise.

Further, labor-saving devices have made it increasingly possible for women to reduce the time required to provide and maintain the support for their marriage partner.

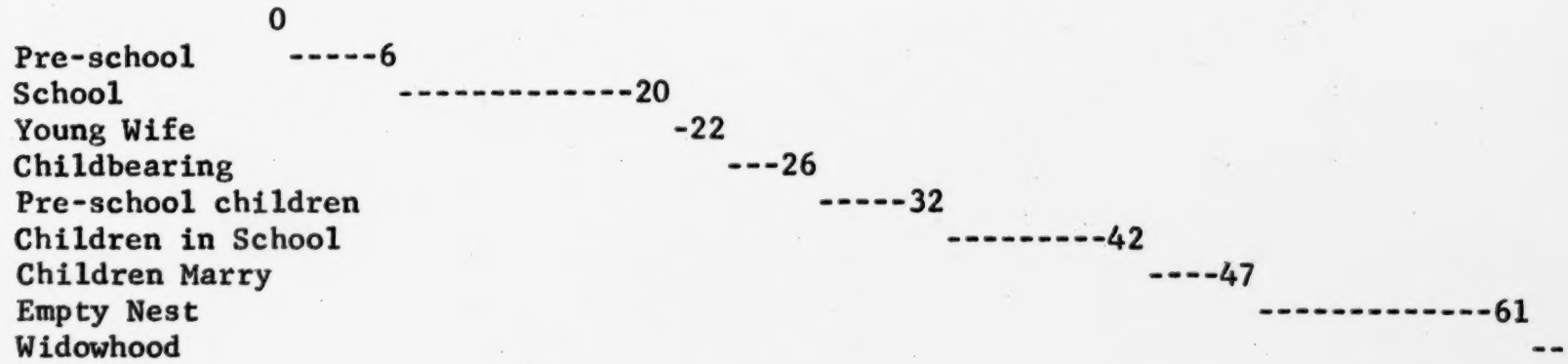
Finally, the available new technologies, the feminist-suffragette movement of the 19th century, and the acceptance of women into the work force in World War II has apparently set in motion changes in the social role for women which may ultimately wipe out their distinction from men.

Postulate II. The nature of the woman's role is not static: it will ultimately bear no distinction from that of men.

Developmental Stages

Just as for men, the life span of women may be described in terms of stages, including especially those which revolve around her reproductive function. Duvall (1967) has extracted from census and vital statistics data the mean ages at which a number of events occur in homemaking and motherhood. These may be taken as marking the essential stages. With some simplifications, they are presented here.

<u>Stage</u>



From this figure, Postulate III is derived: The life role of women is orderly and developmental, and may be divided into segments according to the major task in each.

The Pattern of Vocational Participation

It can be observed that among the stages named above, some present more opportunity than others for entry into the employment or labor market. The woman who enters employment to support herself, or to provide partial or substantial support for the family unit, is described as departing from the modal feminine role in favor of <u>vocational participation</u>. It is regarded as "departure" because homemaking and vocational participation are to a large degree mutually exclusive.

There are any number of reasons for this mutual exclusion of roles. Not the least of them is that in contemporary society, the workplace is unlikely to be in the home. Progress in a career for women is also apt to be handicapped, compared to men, by the fact that it suffers interruption with the birth of each child.

Not negligible also is the fairly subtle, systematic exclusion of women from entry or progress by men. It has been pointed out that the number of women students in professional school is much the same as it was in 1910, shortly after access to them was originally gained. The exclusion cannot be documented, but its effects also are visible in Gilmer's (1961) estimate that only two per cent of the total managerial work force is women, although 13 per cent of women work at managerial occupations.

Postulate IV: Vocational and homemaker participation are largely mutually exclusive. Departure from the homemaker role is undertaken in the form of vocational participation.

That this conflict between career and marital duties is felt and anticipated by young women is seen in the data of Matthews and Tiedeman (1964).

To characterize the work histories of women, it is necessary to specify the distinctive elements of their vocational participation. The following points are offered in this regard.

a. There may be considerable variance in the age of entry into the productive work force. Some girls enter directly following school leaving, whether before or after graduation, while others marry (begin the homemaking role) without having worked, and only participate vocationally after children have attained self sufficiency. Still others may enter and re-enter one or more times, depending upon such events as additional children, the adequacy of the husband's income, and the final departure of the children from the home.

b. If there is only one entry (or few) the span of participation is a distinguishing factor. The career girl (intentional or not) who has only one entry into the labor force needs to be identified as different from the girl who works only between school leaving and childbearing.

c. Finally, the type of work is an important distinction. Most likely there is a difference between the woman who spends a career as a secretary, and one equally long employed as, say, a meteorologist. Or, between the sales clerk who worked until the family came, and the woman engineer who left employment and did not return until after her children were independent. This variable is identified as degree of participation.

Postulate V. Three aspects of vocational participation are sufficient to distinguish patterns of vocational participation: age or ages of entry, span of participation, and degree of participation.

The concept of "degree of participation" requires some careful elaboration. Fundamentally, it refers to the degree to which the occupation can be regarded as "masculine" or "feminine." Typically this identification is achieved by finding components of the performance of work which are typically or frequently observed in the performance of the homemaker role. Thus, the occupation of a nurse is identified as feminine, because the predominantly nurturant behavior it calls for is an important component in the performance of the role of mothering. Caplow (1954) has formalized this distinction by relating occupational behavior to the male, learned, competitive role, and by describing the typical feminine occupation analogous to girl's learning of a nurturant role. Risch and Beymer (1967) employ the concepts of "instrumental" vs "expressive" to the same purposes.

However, because the limits of the homemaker role are broad and varied for different homemakers, this procedure for identifying work as masculine or feminine breaks down. One homemaker may perform her role in more or less an executive manner - managing the investment of a house and other property.

overseeing the expenditure of the budget, supervising the activities of children, while another may avoid some of these duties altogether, and emphasize the ethetic aspects of house decoration and cooking, and the like.

As a consequence, this formulation chooses to identify the degree of participation as follows:

Postulate VI. The degree of vocational participation represented by a given occupation is defined as the proportion of women to the total workers employed in the performance of that job. The occupation of airline stewardess is called a low degree of participation, not because it has resemblance to any of the homemaker roles, but because it is populated almost exclusively with women. The occupation of blacksmith or astronaut would be called a high degree of vocational participation for women, because there are few women performing in these occupations.

With three features of vocational participation identified, it is now possible to consider various combinations of them which make differing career patterns. Very early or late entry, a relatively brief span, and a low degree of participation would describe mild vocational participation.

Early entry, lengthy span, and low degree, or multiple entries and a higher degree (such as a teacher who works before marriage and after children) describes a moderate vocational participation.

Early entry, a lengthy or uninterrupted span, and high degree, such as a woman scientist who does not marry, or marries and has no children combines into unusual vocational participation.

In the order named these patterns constitute a roughly ordinal scale of vocational participation for women, which provides a highly manageable dependent variable for research on the vocational behavior of women. Similar patterns have been identified by Super (1957) and Berry et al. (1966), although neither scaled theirs.

Postulate VII. Women's vocational participation may be distinguished in terms of three levels, derived from the combination of entry age(s), span, and degree of participation, forming an ordinal scale.

The Determinants of Patterns of Vocational Participation

Women have and can express preferences for various patterns of vocational participation. Empey (1958) found in his sample of college student women that roughly 80% preferred marriage over career, 10% the obverse, and that 10% were unsure as to which pattern they preferred. Closer analysis also revealed that many of those who stated their preference in favor of marriage would want to be prepared to undertake a career should it be necessary.

The preference is not necessarily stable; Matthews and Tiedeman (1964) identified what they called a "pseudo-career drive" which appears during the early adolescence of girls. They interpret it as an expression of resentment toward parental ideals of a stable married life.

It is hypothesized that preference is determined mainly by internal, motivational factors. This formulation favors prediction from a valuing system, as a convenient and more reliable way to encode the influential factors. The values, in turn, may be the result of cumulated genetic inheritance, endocrine and nervous system makeup, the effects of early experiences and interactions with parents and siblings, and the like.

Postulate VIII. Women's preference for a pattern of vocational participation is an internal event, and may be accounted for by motivational factors.

There is some evidence to suggest that preference for the more unusual patterns of participation is determined by extraordinary events in early life. Roe and Siegelman (1964) believe that the farther from the cultural

stereotype the occupational choice is, the more likely it is that there have been particular pressures which have predisposed such a choice, such as for women engineers the replacement of a lost father.

The most potent single determinant of a woman's actual pattern of vocational participation is her preference, but whether her preference and her actual vocational participation are identical is decided by a number of factors in addition to those which determine the preference. These are both external and internal but not motivational factors. The former would include such things as the opportunity to obtain the requisite preparation for the preferred participation (such as gaining admission to study, financial resources, etc.) and obstacles to its performance. Caplow (1954) believes that the social class of the woman is inversely related to span and degree of participation. Representative of the internal factors would be intelligence or special abilities required for successful performance. In summary:

> Postulate IX. The pattern of vocational participation is determined jointly by preference (representing motivation) and by external, situational and environmental, and internal, such as ability, factors.

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